CHAPTER 5

Race and Racism

Learning Objectives

- Define race and the flawed biological assumptions often associated with it.
- Compare the construction of race across cultures.
- Explain the unique cultural construction of race in the United States.
- Analyze racism in terms of both individual actions and institutional systems of power.

On the evening of May 25, 2020, Derek Chauvin and three other Minneapolis, Minnesota, police officers violently arrested unarmed forty-six-year-old African American George Floyd outside a neighborhood deli, Cup Foods. For nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds, Chauvin, who is White, held his knee directly on Floyd's neck, while Floyd, who was handcuffed and lying facedown on the street, called out, "I can't breathe." Two other officers knelt on his back for part of the time. The fourth officer prevented onlookers from intervening. George Floyd died as a result.

Seventeen-year-old Darnella Frazier, standing nearby, courageously filmed a graphic ten-minute video of the murder. Other bystanders pleaded with the officers to stop. The statement issued by the Minneapolis Police Department immediately after the killing noted only: "man dies after medical

incident during police interaction." It also claimed that Floyd had physically resisted the officers. Frazier's video clearly contradicted the misleading police report and became key courtroom evidence a year later in the trial of Derek Chauvin. Chauvin—a nineteen-year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department who had been the subject of eighteen previous complaints and had been formally disciplined twice—was convicted of murder and manslaughter and sentenced to twenty-two and half years in prison. He was the first White police officer in Minnesota to be charged in the death of a Black civilian. The City of Minneapolis settled a wrongful death lawsuit with the Floyd family for $27 million. The U.S. Department of Justice indicted all four officers for violating George Floyd's civil rights.

George Floyd's murder sparked a racial justice uprising demanding an end to repeated and systemic police violence against people of color. Millions of people marched in hundreds of towns and cities across the United States, despite the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic that spring, becoming the largest series of civil rights demonstrations in the country's history. Protests spread around the world. Black Lives Matter activists called for rethinking what makes a community truly healthy and safe. They demanded defunding local police departments and reinvesting those funds in efforts to end the daily violence of poverty, mass incarceration, poor housing, underfunded schools, and discriminatory health-care practices affecting communities of color. By adopting George Floyd's cry, "I can't breathe," they simultaneously condemned patterns of racist police violence and the ways that the coronavirus moves along lines of race and class to unequally attack the lungs of people of color across the country and around the world.

The torrent of deadly encounters between police and African Americans across the country—including, notably, the tragic events in Minneapolis—and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement have continued to push race and racism directly into the U.S. national spotlight. Race and racism are incredibly difficult topics of conversation in U.S. culture, whether we are in a classroom, a courtroom, a religious setting, the halls of Congress, the streets of Minneapolis, or our own local communities. How do we create opportunities to explore ideas of race and the way those ideas shape our lives and culture? In a country that likes to think of itself as color-blind, how do we as anthropologists make sense of the continuing inequalities in income, wealth, education, access to health care, police enforcement, and incarceration rates that break so clearly along color lines (Shanklin 1998)?

Anthropologists view race as a framework of categories created to divide the human population. Western Europeans originally developed this framework as part of their global expansion beginning in the 1400s (Sanjek 1994). As they encountered, mapped, and colonized people in Africa, Asia, the

Pacific, and the Americas, Europeans placed them into an "international hierarchy of races, colors, religions and cultures" (Trouillot 1994, 146). The exact labels and expressions have varied over time and place as colonial powers engaged with local cultures and confronted local resistance. But the underlying project—to stratify people into groups based on assumed natural differences in intelligence, attractiveness, capacity for civilization, and fundamental worth in relation to people of European descent—has been remarkably consistent (Mullings 2005a).

As we will explore in this chapter, anthropologists today find no scientific basis for classifications of race. Genetically there is only one race—the human race, with all its apparent diversity. Yet despite consistent efforts over the last century by anthropologists and others to counter the inaccurate belief that races are biologically real, race has remained a powerful framework through which many people see human diversity and through which those in power organize the distribution of privileges and resources. Race—which is scientifically not real—has become culturally real in the pervasive racism found across many parts of the globe, including the United States.

Over the past 500 years, race as a way of organizing the world has been put to destructive use, wreaking an enormous toll on both its victims and its proponents. Race and racism have justified the conquest, enslavement, forced transportation, and economic and political domination of some humans by others. Today, race and racism have become so integral to patterns of human relations in many parts of the world that inherited racial categories may seem to be natural, and the inequality built on racism may seem to represent "real" differences among "real" races.

In this chapter, we will critique arguments for the existence of discrete biological human groups called "races." We will consider the roots of race and racism in the European colonial past and the different ways they are expressed in various places today. We will examine the construction of race in the United States over the past 400 years and the ways race and racism continue to shape U.S. culture. And we will explore how race and racism intersect with class and other systems of power. In particular, we will consider the following questions:

- Do biologically separate races exist?
- How is race constructed around the world?
- How is race constructed in the United States?
- What is racism?

We will examine **race** as a flawed system of classification, created and re-created over time, that uses certain physical characteristics (such as skin color, hair texture,

race: A flawed system of classification, with no biological basis, that uses certain physical characteristics to divide the human population into supposedly discrete groups.

eye shape, and eye color) to divide the human population into a few supposedly discrete biological groups and attributes to those groups unique combinations of physical ability, mental capacity, personality traits, cultural patterns, and capacity for civilization. Drawing on anthropological research, however, we will see that racial categories have no biological basis. We might even say that races, as a biological concept, do not exist. The danger in this statement about biological race is that it may lead us to the mistaken conclusion that race does not exist. On the contrary, race as a cultural construction has very real consequences.

Race is a deeply influential system of thinking that affects people and institutions. Over time, imagined categories of race have shaped our cultural institutions—schools, places of worship, media, political parties, economic practices—and have organized the allocation of wealth, power, and privilege at all levels of society. Race has served to create and justify patterns of power and inequality within cultures worldwide, and many people have learned to see those patterns as normal and reasonable. So, in this chapter, we will also examine **racism**: individuals' thoughts and actions, as well as institutional patterns and policies, that create or reproduce unequal access to power, privilege, resources, and opportunities based on imagined differences among groups (Omi and Winant 1994).

racism: Individuals' thoughts and actions and institutional patterns and policies that create or reproduce unequal access to power, privilege, resources, and opportunities based on imagined differences among groups.

By the end of the chapter, you will have the anthropological tools to understand not only the flaws in arguments for biologically discrete races but also the history and current expressions of race and racism globally and in the United States. This first chapter of the section "Unmasking the Structures of Power" addresses race and racism. The following chapters address ethnicity and

nationalism, gender, sexuality, kinship, and class. Each of these systems of power—its ideas and institutions—shapes individual life chances and creates societal patterns of inequality by differentially allocating access to rights, privileges, assets, and opportunities. While examining each system of power in its own right, we will also consider the elaborate intersections among them as they work together to create inequality. For instance, how did race, gender, and class intersect to shape the disastrous encounter between George Floyd and Derek Chauvin on a Minneapolis street corner? In recent years, this attention to **intersectionality** has become increasingly prominent in anthropological research and analysis. Over the course of this chapter and the chapters that follow, our discussion will prepare you to apply these anthropological tools and perspectives, if you so choose, to engage in efforts against racism and other systems of inequality on your college campus, in your community, and throughout the world.

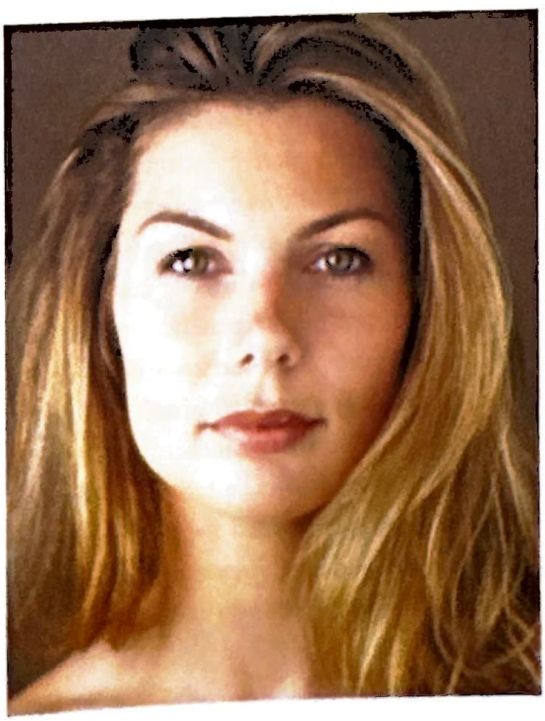
intersectionality: An analytic framework for assessing how factors such as race, gender, and class interact to shape individual life chances and societal patterns of stratification.

Do Biologically Separate Races Exist?

» Define race and the flawed biological assumptions often associated with it.

Many of us were enculturated to believe that "race" refers to distinct physical characteristics that mark individuals as clearly belonging in one group and not in another. However, anthropologists see race very differently. Contemporary

What can you know about a person's genetic makeup based on their outward appearance? Variations of skin color or other visible characteristics often associated with race are shaped by less than 0.1 percent of our genetic code. Contrary to certain stereotypes, they do not predict anything else about a person's genetic makeup, physical or mental capabilities, culture, or personality.



studies of human genetics reveal no biologically distinct human groups. We can state this with certainty despite centuries of scientific and pseudoscientific effort to prove the existence of distinct biological races, and despite the widespread popular belief that different races exist. In fact, humans are almost identical: We share more than 99.9 percent of our DNA with one another. The small differences that do exist are not distributed in any way that would correspond with popular notions of separate races. Racial categories are not fixed in nature but, as we will explore later in this chapter, have changed constantly over time as people have created and perpetuated them through individual and collective action (Ossorio and Duster 2005).

First, however, let's explore some of the science behind race.

Fuzzy Boundaries in a Well-Integrated Gene Pool

Some biological anthropologists have compared modern humans to a little village that has grown very quickly. Throughout the short 200,000-year history of modern humans, we have basically been functioning as one enormous, interconnected gene pool, swapping genetic material back and forth (by interbreeding) quite freely within the village. Over the years, our family trees have intersected again and again.

If you trace your own family back for thirty generations—parents to grandparents to great-grandparents, and so on—you will find that in less than a thousand years, you have accumulated 1 billion relatives. It is not hard to imagine the myriad and unpredictable exchanges of genetic material among that large a group. Now extend your family tree back 100,000 years—the time it has taken for a few small groups of humans to migrate out of Africa and populate the entire planet. It is easy to imagine the billions of times this growing population has exchanged genetic material. Such deep integration of the human gene pool means that no clear and absolute genetic lines can be drawn to separate people into biologically discrete "racial" populations.

As a result of this gene flow, human variation changes gradually over geographic space in a continuum (what biological anthropologists refer to as a *cline*), not by abrupt shifts or according to clearly marked groups. Even skin color, perhaps most frequently imagined to demarcate separate races, in fact varies so gradually over geographic space that there are no clear boundaries between one population and another, nor color groupings that distinguish one population from another. If you flew from western Africa to Russia, you would notice distinct variations in physical human form between the population where you boarded the plane and the population where you disembarked. But if you walked from western Africa to Russia, there would never be a point along the way where you could stop and say that the people on one side of the

road are of one race and the people on the other side are of a different race (see Figure 5.1).

Perhaps more surprising, a person from western Africa who starts walking toward Russia may have more in common genetically with someone at the end of their trek than they do with a neighbor at home. This seems hard to imagine because we have been enculturated to believe that a very small number of traits—including skin color, hair texture, and eye color and shape—can serve to categorize people into distinct groups and predict larger genetic patterns. This is a flawed assumption. The human gene pool continues to be highly integrated. Minor genetic variations such as skin color cannot be used to predict anything else in an individual's genetic makeup. People in a particular region of the world whose ancestors have inhabited that area for an extended period of time may have some increased likelihood of genetic similarity because of the greater probability that those who are geographically closer will swap genetic material. But group boundaries are fuzzy and porous. People move and genes flow. Ultimately, group genetic probabilities cannot predict the genetic makeup of any individual in the group.

The Wild Goose Chase: Linking Phenotype to Genotype

In considering human physical diversity, biological anthropologists distinguish between genotype and phenotype. **Genotype** refers to the inherited genetic factors that provide a framework for an organism's physical form; these factors constitute the total genetic endowment that the organism, in turn, can pass down to its descendants. In contrast, **phenotype** refers to how genes are expressed in an organism's physical form (both visible and invisible) as a result of its genotype's interaction with environmental factors, such as nutrition, disease, and stress.

genotype: The inherited genetic factors that provide the framework for an organism's physical form.

phenotype: The way genes are expressed in an organism's physical form as a result of genotype interaction with environmental factors.

The widespread belief that certain phenotypes, such as skin color, are linked to physical and mental capabilities, personality types, or cultural patterns is incorrect but deeply ingrained and difficult to reimagine.

As individuals, we may make snap judgments based on phenotypical traits that we erroneously assume indicate a person's "race"; with a quick glance we may think we know something significant about that individual. On the basis of phenotype alone, we may consider someone to be smarter, faster, stronger, safe or dangerous, better at business, better at math, a better dancer or singer, more prone to alcoholism, more artistic, more susceptible to certain diseases, a better lover. You might call this the "White Men Can't Jump" or "Asians Are Better at Math" way of thinking about race and genes. But what can we really tell about someone from these superficial characteristics?

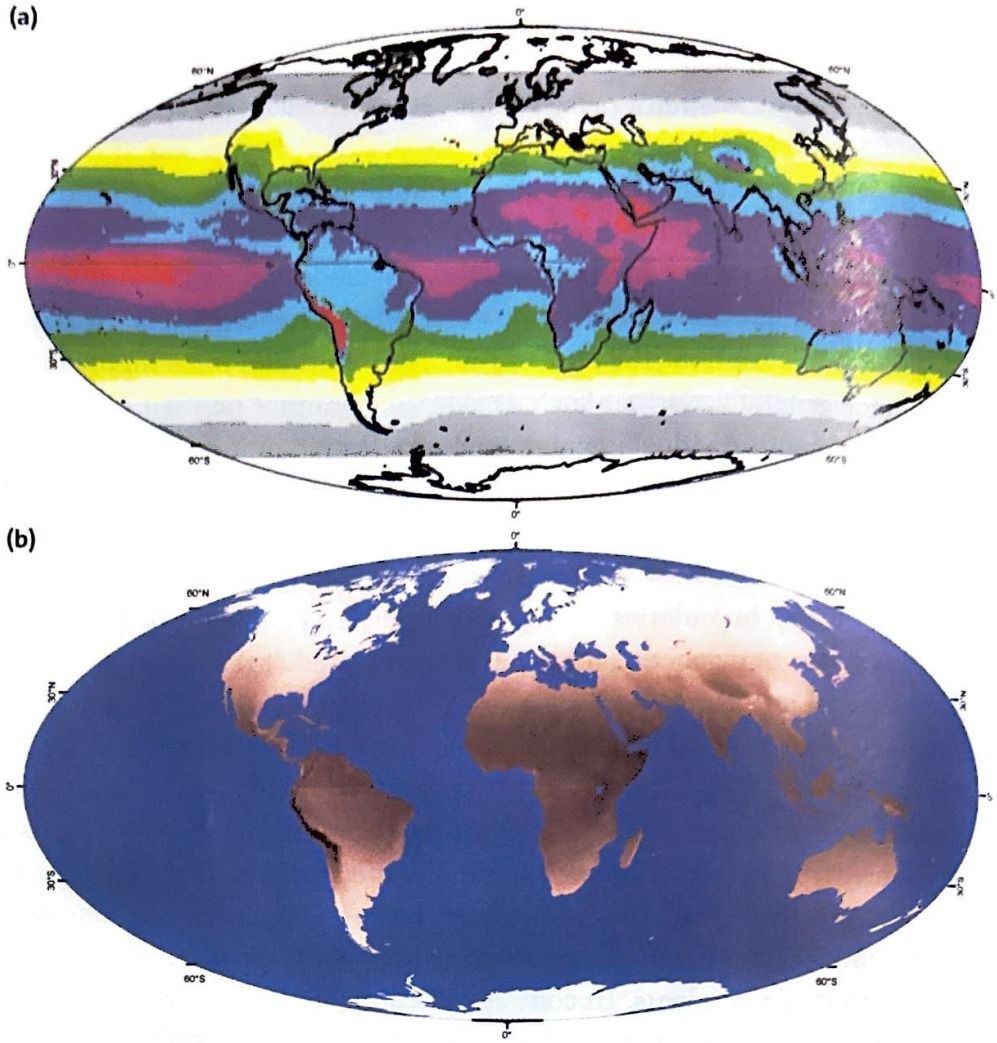


FIGURE 5.1 SKIN COLOR VARIATION Skin color varies gradually in relation to the intensity of ultraviolet (UV) light. As shown below, one does not cluster into color groupings with clear boundaries. Nor does skin color predict any other genetic difference.

(a) Clinal distribution of UV light intensity, with the highest intensity near the equator and lowest near the poles. **(b)** Clinal distribution of skin color, closely tracking the intensity of UV light.

SOURCE: Modified from Jablonski, Nina G. 2006. *Skin: A Natural History.* Berkeley: University of California Press. Images by George Chaplin.

A relatively small number of genes control the traits frequently used today to distinguish one "race" from another—skin color, eye shape, or hair texture, for instance. As a result, in the short history of modern humans, these genes have been able to change rapidly in response to the environment. For example, as humans moved out of Africa and across the globe into a wide variety of physical environments, traits such as skin color, which are shaped by a relatively small cluster of genes, were more susceptible to environmental pressures and adapted more quickly. In contrast, traits such as intelligence, athletic or artistic ability, and social skills appear to be shaped by complex combinations of thousands or tens of thousands of genes, so they have been much less susceptible to environmental pressures. Adaptations in skin color were not accompanied by adaptations in, say, intelligence, musical ability, or physical ability. It is important to note that genetic research consistently shows that the genes that

influence skin color, eye shape, or hair texture are not linked to any other genes and cannot predict anything about the rest of a person's underlying genotype (Mukhopadhyay, Henze, and Moses 2007).

Jonathan Marks, a leading biological anthropologist, compares the problem of sorting people into races with the problem children might have of sorting blocks into categories. Imagine that you start with a pile of blocks and ask a group of children to sort them into "large" and "small." They might agree on some—the largest and the smallest. But others in between might be harder to classify. "The fact that the blocks can be sorted into the categories given, however, does not imply that there are two kinds of blocks in the universe, large and small—and that the child has uncovered a transcendent pattern in the sizing of the blocks. It simply means that if categories are given, they can be imposed upon the blocks" (Marks 1995, 159).

The same is true for humans and the concept of race. If you give people a limited range of categories for skin color groups, they will be able to place many people into these categories. Some individuals who lie in the boundaries may be more difficult to categorize. But would this exercise uncover some deep, intrinsic, genetic pattern about humans? No, because traits like skin color are not linked to any other particular set of genes and cannot predict anything else about a person's underlying genotype.

Why Not Construct Race on the Basis of Earwax?

From a genetic viewpoint, the use of skin color as the primary variable in constructing a person's "race" appears to be quite arbitrary. A number of other genes or gene combinations create phenotypic differences that could serve the

Looks can be deceiving. Which group is more genetically diverse?

same purpose. Why not choose eye color, hairiness (amount and location), earlobe shape, fingerprint pattern, nose shape, double-jointed fingers, height, or weight? Another possibility could be earwax.

There are two primary types of earwax (Jurmain and Nelson 1994). One is dry, gray, and crumbly. The other is wet, yellow, and sticky. Fully 90 percent of Europeans and only 4 percent of people in northern China have the second variety. Imagine dividing up your classmates into races based on one of these earwax characteristics, rather than skin color. How would you configure the group? Do you think that one subgroup/race would have any natural advantages over the others?

Can you imagine hierarchical systems of race that affect distributions of power and resources and that are based on differences in earwax? What if students in your college were guaranteed individual tutoring by the instructor if they had wet earwax? What if students were required to sit in the back of the room, where it is harder to hear the lecture, if they had dry earwax? Surely, such distinctions will strike you as absurd. Why not, then, regard distinctions made on the basis of skin color as equally absurd?

Would you be surprised to learn that there is more genetic difference between two penguins than between two humans? Penguins appear identical to the human eye and are found in a small range of habitats (unlike humans, who range over the entire globe). But penguins have been around a lot longer than modern humans, so they have had more time to evolve and develop greater genetic variation within their species. Does knowing this fact challenge you to be more skeptical of assumed links between outward appearances and underlying genotype?

How Is Race Constructed around the World?

» Compare the construction of race across cultures.

Racial categories are human constructs; they are not found in nature. Yet they have become so deeply internalized that they feel natural and provide one of the most powerful frameworks through which we experience the world (Mukhopadhyay, Henze, and Moses 2007). Anthropologists examine race and racism on a global scale and thus from different angles, identifying their regional similarities and variations and, in the process, revealing how these concepts have evolved and might be changed through individual and collective action.

Race and the Legacy of Colonialism

Contemporary global expressions of race and racism are deeply rooted in the systems of classification that western Europeans created as they expanded their colonial empires into Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas beginning in

the 1400s. **Colonialism** became the centerpiece of European global economic activity, combining economic, military, and political control of people and places to fuel Europe's economic expansion and to enhance the continent's position in the emerging global economy (see Chapter 11). The classification of people based on phenotype, particularly skin color, became the key framework for creating a hierarchy of races—with Europeans at the top—that falsely linked people's looks with assumptions about their intelligence, physical abilities, capacity for culture, and basic worth. Eventually this framework served to justify colonial conquests, the transatlantic slave trade, and the eradication of much of the Indigenous population of the Americas (Gregory and Sanjek 1994).

colonialism: The practice by which a nation-state extends political, economic, and military power beyond its own borders over an extended period of time to secure access to raw materials, cheap labor, and markets in other countries or regions.

Taking a global perspective, anthropologists often refer to "racisms" in the plural, reflecting the variety of ways race has been constructed among people in different places. Locally and nationally, racisms and systems of racial classification are complex frameworks that derive from encounters among colonialism and local cultural patterns, global migration, and specific movements of resistance. Even though racializing systems around the world may all have their roots in European colonialism, they manifest themselves differently in different places and at different times.

Racial frameworks and systems of racism have changed significantly over the last century. After World War II, colonial-era racist political and legal structures shifted as national liberation movements rose up against occupations by foreign powers. In addition, anti-racist liberation movements in this postcolonial period challenged long-term patterns of race and racial discrimination. Notably, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa resisted dominant White rule, eventually reversing decades of legal structural discrimination and violence. The civil rights movement challenged more than 300 years of race-based inequality in the United States. Today, globalization has brought about new experiences of race and racism (as we will see in the case studies that follow).

Indeed, in today's global world, flexible accumulation produces new relationships between corporations and workers, the migration of workers within countries and across borders yields new racial formations, and time-space compression enhances communication tools that can be employed to resist traditional hierarchies while perpetuating old racial frameworks on a global scale. Racisms today, though rooted in similar historical realities, are shifting as they intersect with other systems of power, whether those are ethnicity, gender, sexuality, kinship, or class (Mullings 2005a). The exact expression of these constructs varies from culture to culture and place to place depending on why races were originally invented and how they have been used to establish and maintain hierarchies of power.

Race, Skin Color, and Class in the Dominican Republic When Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola (now comprising the Dominican

MAP 5.1
Haiti / Dominican Republic

Republic and Haiti) in 1492, he launched a complicated story of race, colonization, and globalization for the people who would inherit the land over the next 500 years. Within fifty years of Columbus's arrival, perhaps hundreds of thousands of the island's Indigenous inhabitants had been killed through brutal forced labor, new diseases introduced from Europe, and suicide. In 1520, the Spanish began to import enslaved Africans to work the sugar plantations that were feeding Europeans' growing sugar addiction (Mintz 1985). Subsequently, the French took possession of the western third of Hispaniola and continued the slaving practice until they were overthrown in the Haitian Revolution of 1804 (Trouillot 1994). The island's residents established an independent nation of formerly enslaved Africans—the first in the world—and changed the dynamic of the growing global economy and slave trade (see Chapter 11).

On the eastern two-thirds of the island, Dominican nationalists declared independence from Spain in 1821 and moved to shape a distinct national identity in opposition to Haiti. They emphasized the connection to their former colonial ruler, Spain, not to Africa, and they joined the economic system dominated by Europe and the United States, where racial thinking was stratified around Whiteness. Dominicans' early identification as Hispanic, not as Black, is a dynamic that still pervades the population's racial thinking today.

The Dominican Republic is an active participant in today's global economic system. Sugar, coffee, cacao, and tobacco production for export still play a significant role in the national economy. More recently, tourism, export-processing factories, and money sent home from the Dominican diaspora have expanded Dominican integration into the global economy, an integration that

Race has had a complicated history on the island of Hispaniola over the past 500 years. (*Left to right*) Stylized engraving of Christopher Columbus landing on the island in 1492; Black revolt in Haiti against French rule, 1791; workers on a small tobacco plantation, Dominican Republic.

reaches the island's most rural levels. Race, with a significant overlay of class, has become a powerful framework for organizing difference and creating stratification in the Dominican Republic. In a small country of 10 million people where linguistic (Spanish) and religious (Catholic) differences are limited, skin color serves as the key signifier—although higher-class status can "lighten" Dominicans, a dynamic we will also consider in the case of Brazil. Unlike the United States, where conceptions of race are usually limited to four or five skin-color classifications, Dominicans use a wide range of variable and often inconsistent color terms, including *coffee*, *chocolate*, *cinnamon*, *wheat*, *indio*, *rosy*, *faded*, *blond*, *fair*, *dark*, and *ashen*.

None of the Dominican racial identifiers denotes "black." A cornerstone of this framework is the rejection of African ancestry and of Blackness more generally. Haitians, who are generally darker skinned than many Dominicans, mostly speak Creole, not Spanish, and they practice Catholicism intertwined with African religious beliefs. These factors combine to mark Haitians as racially "other" in the Dominican Republic. The republic's agriculture, tourism, and construction trades draw a steady stream of Haitian migrants across the border, both legally and illegally. Haitian migrants do back-breaking labor for meager wages and endure constant discrimination. Anti-Haitian sentiment is widespread, and false stereotypes repeated in popular conversation and in the press warn of the "Haitian threat" to the economy and national stability (Gregory 2006; Howard 2001; Martinez 1996; Simmons 2011). In 2013, the top Dominican court ruled that children born of undocumented foreigners—85 percent of whom are Haitian—would be stripped of their citizenship. And

Bachata music portrays the complex understanding of race in the Dominican Republic.

in 2015, the Dominican government began a process of registering the country's estimated 500,000 undocumented residents and deporting those found to be without citizenship.

However, in a sign of how complicated the constructs of race and racism are, anti-Black and anti-Haitian sentiments are not uniform across the Dominican Republic. In both urban and rural settings, individual encounters within a local community context often overcome the stereotypes. Samuel Martinez points out that "even as a numerically sizable minority of Dominicans voice blatantly racist sentiments, it is common for people of lower-income groups to identify themselves and their loved ones as 'black' in song and folklore" (2003, 89). Deborah Pacini-Hernandez (1995) has documented the song-dance genre *bachata* that is prevalent in poor urban neighborhoods and rural work sites. *Bachata* commonly uses *negro*, *prieto*, and *morena* terms for Black or dark men and women, to refer to the singers, their lovers, and their audience. These uses reflect a more sympathetic engagement with Blackness and race at the local level—among the rural and urban working classes who have dark skin and lower social status.

The work of Martinez and Pacini-Hernandez challenges us to acknowledge the complexity of analyzing race in the Dominican Republic. In fact, their work underscores the importance of examining local expressions of race and racism and the ways in which communities continue to reimagine the racial categories imposed by colonial powers, contemporary Western media, and powerful local elites.

Class, Gender, and Hundreds of Races in Brazil Brazil provides another site to explore the cultural construction of race and its intersection with social stratification. The United States and Brazil are today the two largest multiracial countries in the Western Hemisphere, although they have traveled two very different paths in framing racial identities and hierarchies. By the time Brazil outlawed slavery in 1888, the country had the largest African population in the New World. This situation reflected the grim fact that during and after Brazil's time as a colony of Portugal (1500–1815), 40 percent of all Africans in the transatlantic slave trade were taken to Brazil to work on Portuguese plantations and mines. Brazil was the last country in the Americas to outlaw slavery—a full generation after the U.S. Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Today, Brazilians describe the human physical diversity called "race" in great detail. Although Brazil's system of racial classification is color-coded, its color terminology is uniquely expansive, encompassing hundreds of categories (Freyre 1933; Harris 1964, 1970). Terms include *alva* (pure white), *alva-escuro* (off-white), *alva-rosada* (pinkish white), *branca* (white), *clara* (light), *branca morena* (darkish white), *branca suja* (dirty white), *café* (coffee colored), *café com leite* (coffee with milk), *canela* (cinnamon), *preta* (black), and *pretinha* (lighter black) (Fluehr-Lobban 2006). Brazilian race categories thus represent a nuanced continuum of appearance rather than a few rigid groups, as those used in the United States do.

Brazil's population of Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous people has a long history of interracial mixing. The Portuguese colonial government promoted assimilation and did not bar **miscegenation**—that is, interracial marriage. As a result, many single Portuguese men who settled in Brazil chose to intermarry. Nor has Brazil applied the rule of hypodescent—the "one drop of blood" rule—that in the United States meant that having even one Black ancestor out of many could mark an individual as Black (see "The Rule of Hypodescent" later in this chapter). As a result, a Brazilian family may include children who are categorized as various shades of white, brown, and black.

miscegenation: A demeaning historical term for interracial marriage.

Race in Brazil is not solely a function of skin color. In fact, race intersects closely with class—including land ownership, wealth, and education—in determining social status. Because of the power of class, a Brazilian's racial position can be modified by their level of affluence. Affluence can shift a Brazilian's racial identity in spite of skin color and other supposedly "racial" markers (Walker 2002).

Some scholars refer to Brazil as a "racial democracy" and extol the nation as an exceptional example of racial harmony (Freyre 1933; Harris 1964; Kottak 2006). Brazil's government abolished the use of racial categories in the 1930s and constitutionally banned racism in 1951. The complex and fluid color classifications—and the absence of political and legal mechanisms to establish and enforce a clear color line between Black and White—are seen as a sign of tolerance. In addition, the incorporation of key African cultural practices as symbols of the Brazilian nation (including carnival, samba, Candomblé religious practices, capoeira, and specific cuisine) is often cited as supporting evidence for the racial democracy thesis (Downey 2005).

MAP 5.2
Brazil

Other scholars have noted that despite the appearance of racial democracy, inequality exists in almost every area of Brazilian life and is directly linked to color. Darker-skinned Brazilians face higher levels of exclusion and injustice, and a systemic correlation exists between color and economics. Most of the poor are Afro-Brazilians. Most of the rich are White. Racial democracy may instead be simply a myth that serves as a cornerstone of Brazil's national denial

of the existence of racism (Harrison 2002b; Roth-Gordon 2016; Smith 2016).

In *Laughter Out of Place* (2003), anthropologist Donna Goldstein writes about poor working women from the bleak favela (shantytown) ironically named Felicidade Eterna ("eternal happiness"). These women support their families as domestic workers for middle-class Brazilian families who live in the affluent sections of Rio de Janeiro. Gloria, poor and dark skinned, raising fourteen children, including nine of her own, works as a domestic servant, shopping, cooking, and cleaning. She earns $5 a day—just enough to feed herself and her family. The pay is off the books, so she has no legal labor protections, no insurance, and no pension. Goldstein links the contemporary culture of domestic work, particularly the employer–domestic servant relationship, to the historic institution of slavery in Brazil. Middle-class families enjoy a kind of learned helplessness similar to that of the slave owner—allowing their workers to do the dirty, manual chores. The employer–domestic servant relationship, like the owner–slave relationship, is characterized by domination, strict rules, and social separation.

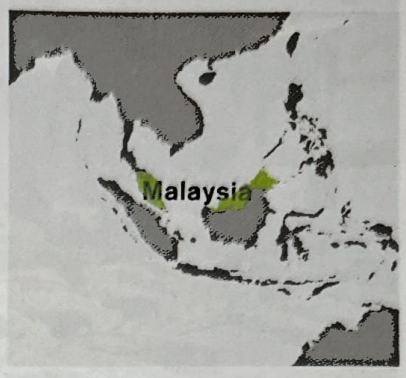
How do Brazil's marginalized and oppressed people make sense of their lives—lives overburdened with poverty, violence, and work at the bottom of a global hierarchy of race, class, and gender, yet lives that also display dignity and resilience? Goldstein explores the role of laughter and humor as means to cope with persistent brutality. She particularly notes a humor that recognizes life's absurdities and ironies and provides perspective to a sense of injustice. She recalls, for instance, the awkwardness of "laughter out of place," as domestic workers and employers laugh at different times and for different reasons when they watch the local soap operas that dramatize middle-class Brazilian life. The distinctive life experiences of worker and employer create vastly different viewing experiences, casting the televised dramas of the Brazilian middle class in sharp contrast to the traumas of the domestic workers living in the favela—a contrast so absurd as to evoke laughter out of place.

Race, Gender, and Globalization in Malaysia The development of the idea of race in Malaysia and the ways it has mixed with notions of ethnicity and religion reveal how "race" is not a fixed category. A hierarchy of race was originally introduced into Malaysia (originally called Malaya) by Dutch, Portuguese, and British colonialists, and it continues to change in today's postcolonial era in response to the globalization of media, finance, labor, and diseases (including HIV/AIDS).

When Portuguese and Dutch colonial powers led western Europe's expansion into Malaysia in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, social relations in the country were primarily organized around land. Geography, local cultural practices, and economic strategies were the main differences among

people, not assumptions about biology, phenotype, or the idea of race. The local land-oriented groups initially resisted colonial attempts to exploit Malaysia's mineral resources. Beginning in 1786, however, overwhelming British military power and persistent colonial administration began a 300-year process that dismantled Malaysian social patterns and replaced them with a European-style, race-based structure with three distinct categories: Indian, Chinese, and Malay.

Differing treatment of the three groups reinforced the race-based system. British colonial authorities recruited immigrant laborers from India to work on coffee, sugar, and rubber plantations, and they brought in Chinese laborers to mine tin. They also trained some Indians for mid-level, colonial civil service jobs and encouraged Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in the main port cities to establish the urban small-business core of the national economy. The British left the Malay majority—largely rural and uneducated—working in the rice paddies, although a few local Malay elite were co-opted into the colonial administration.



MAP 5.3
Malaysia

Even though the country's economic activities have shifted over the centuries, particularly since Malaysian independence in 1957, the racial categories that the British established are still in use today. They are no longer legally enforced, but the patterns of economic and political interaction organized along racial lines continue. Deep dissatisfaction over the constructed racial identities, and particularly the vast economic inequities that operate along racial lines, have led to social unrest and political struggle, including massive rioting in 1969. Again in 2005, Malays, who constitute 50 percent of the population, took to the streets to protest what they considered to be an unequal distribution of wealth among the main social groups in the country, which also include Chinese (23 percent), Indians (7 percent), and the Indigenous Orang Asli.

In an attempt to minimize racial disparities, Malaysia opened its doors in the 1970s to the forces of globalization by establishing one of the first export-processing zones in Southeast Asia. These low-tax, low-wage zones attracted multinational corporations in search of cheap labor to supply products for a global assembly line, especially in the electronics industry. Over the past forty years, factories in Malaysia's export-processing zones have attracted hundreds of thousands of young migrant women workers, popularly known as Minah Karan (Ong 1987).

Minah Karan have reframed the racial order that British colonial administrators created centuries ago. Although export-processing zones were established as geographically bounded areas where manufacturing could take place, they have also become spaces where many different people interact with a frequency and diversity not seen before in Malaysia. As a result, factories, and the export-processing zones in general, have become places of multiracial encounters in a nation with clear racial boundaries. As factories have drawn workers from across Malaysia and from neighboring countries, unusual and countercultural

The racial framework established by British colonialists, while no longer legally enforced, still shapes Malaysian culture today. (*Clockwise from left*) A young Malay woman assembles electronic components in a Malaysian export-processing factory; Malaysian Chinese entrepreneurs open a coffee shop; a diverse group of students crosses the street in Penang, Malaysia.

"mixing" has been taking place. In this context, mixing may simply mean enjoying social interactions, but it may also refer to sexual relations among individuals of different social groups. Malay, Chinese, Indian, and other immigrant women mix on the factory floor. Rural, young, and unmarried women workers mix with male, married, Chinese and Indian managers and engineers.

Women factory workers, many of them teenagers, have broken the gender-racial boundaries of Malaysian culture by working in the multiracial, multigendered, foreign-owned factories. The name *Minah Karan* suggests the complicated ways in which ideas of race interact with ideas of gender, foreignness, sexuality, modernity, moral deterioration, and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. *Minah*, a common Malay woman's name, reflects the mass migration of rural workers to the factories. However, *Karan* carries two meanings. The first ("electric current") situates these women in the electronics factories. But the second meaning implies sexual electricity. These young women have driven the expansion of electronics-exporting factories; thus they have been key to the growth of the national, regional, and global economies. Their work has provided financial resources for their rural families back home during times of agricultural distress. And giving these women access to wages has transformed gender relationships at many levels.

Though imagined as "electric" by some, this racial mixing appears to others as morally questionable. By working away from their villages, earning their own income as young women, laboring on night shifts, and generally operating outside the disciplinary oversight of family members and community elders, these women have been stigmatized as undisciplined, "loose," and "easy." Early on, observers considered their mixing with men and people of other classes, kinship networks, and social groups to be risky, even dangerous, behavior that might lead to moral contamination, impurity, and disease.

Anthropologist Robin Root has conducted research on HIV/AIDS inside the electronics factories. In particular, she has examined the intersection of globalization, Malaysian ideas of race and sexuality, and the real and imagined risks of disease for the women factory workers. Indeed, the risks for HIV/AIDS are elevated in the export-processing zones. But Root finds that many Malaysians exercise a moral imagination in which they assume that these risks are elevated because of the racial and sexual mixing. These imaginations discourage women from working in factories and stigmatize those who do. In the process, the stigma and moral judgments serve to reinforce the colonial three-race hierarchy and to resist change brought by globalization, including the possibility of change in racial and gender boundaries (Root 2006).

How Is Race Constructed in the United States?

» Explain the unique cultural construction of race in the United States.

Race is perhaps the most significant way of marking difference in U.S. culture. References to race can be found on census forms, school applications, and birth certificates, as well as in the media and casual conversation. Race is also a key framework that shapes the allocation of power, privilege, rewards, and status in the United States, and it infuses all of our political, economic, religious, recreational, educational, and cultural institutions (Smedley 1993). Yet it is one of the least discussed topics in U.S. culture and one of the most difficult to explore, even in anthropology. How do we begin to engage this difficult dialogue?

At the beginning of every semester, I ask my students to start the process by naming the different races. This seems like an easy task at first. Then students begin to struggle with the categories that U.S. culture has handed them. We quickly see that ideas of race are complicated by geography, language, skin color, and even religion. "Who is Asian?" I ask. "Are Filipinos Asian? Or are they Pacific Islanders? Are the people who live in the eastern two-thirds of Russia Asians? After all, they do live on the continent of Asia. Are Pakistanis Asian?"

"They were before Pakistan was partitioned from India. Now they're Middle Easterners," says a student.

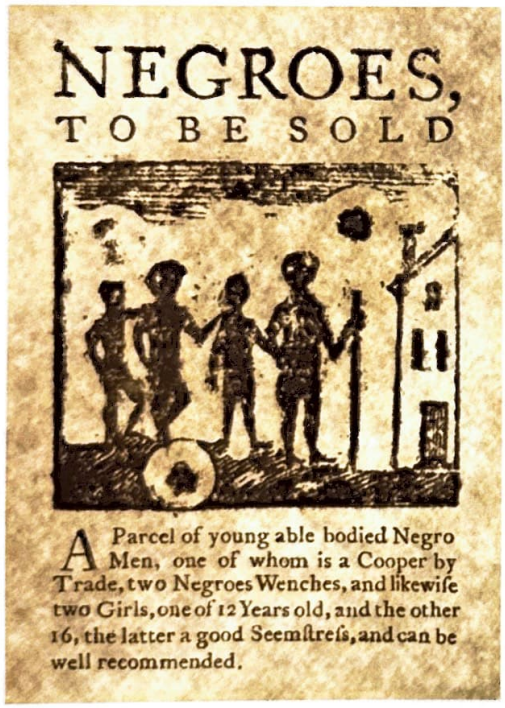
"Middle Eastern is not one of the racial categories usually on the list," I reply. "And by the way, can race shift along political lines?"

"Middle Easterners are White," says another student.

"But what countries are in the Middle East?" asks another. "My mom is from China and my dad is from Bolivia. What race am I?"

History of U.S. Racial Categories: Constructing Whiteness

The U.S. racial system developed at the intersection of slavery and the European conquest of Indigenous peoples of the North American continent. From its origins, American colonial life was built on the importation of indentured workers from Europe and enslaved people from Africa, along with the expropriation of land from Native Americans. Intensive agricultural work, particularly in the U.S. South, required a reliable and plentiful labor supply. Native Americans suffered quick and brutal extermination in other parts of the Americas through forced labor, violence, and disease, but they largely resisted forced labor in the North American colonies. European indentured laborers were in short supply. So imported enslaved Africans became the preferred workforce. Over 300 years, millions were forcibly transported to the Americas through the transatlantic slave trade.


NEGROES,
TO BE SOLD
A Parcel of young able bodied Negro Men, one of whom is a Cooper by Trade, two Negroes Wenches, and likewiſe two Girls, one of 12 Years old, and the other 16, the latter a good Seemſtreſs, and can be well recommended.

(*Left*) An advertisement for a slave auction, June 23, 1768. (*Right*) A slave family picking cotton in the fields near Savannah, Georgia, ca. 1860s.

The economics of slavery benefited all the American colonies. In Dutch New Amsterdam (now New York City), people of African descent made up 25 percent of the population as early as 1640. New York served as a hub for the slave trade. Slave ships delivered Africans for resale across the colonies as well as to plantations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cargo ships brought the products of slave labor—cotton, sugarcane, tobacco—to New York on their way back to Europe. Throughout the American South, Africans were enslaved to work on agricultural plantations. In fact, plantation owners often sought out those Africans who had specialized agricultural knowledge. In *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora* (2008), Edda Fields-Black uses linguistic, archaeological, and historical evidence to demonstrate how tidal rice-growing technology developed among the Baga and Nalu of coastal Guinea in West Africa and how this technology spread to the rice industry in South Carolina and Georgia (see also Carney 2002).

The unique system of slavery that emerged relied not only on the legal right of landholders to enslave other people but also on the widespread acceptance of **White supremacy**—the belief that non-Whites were biologically different, intellectually inferior, and not fully human in a spiritual sense. Reflecting these ideas, the U.S. census from 1790 to 1860 counted each enslaved person as only three-fifths of a person. Only in 1868, upon ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, did this practice come to an end. Subsequently, the 1870 census was the first to count all people as whole people.

White supremacy: The belief that White people are biologically different from and superior to people of other races.

The term *White* was itself a construction, first appearing in a public document in reference to a separate race in 1691 in Virginia. Colonial laws created and rigidly regulated **Whiteness,** establishing sharp boundaries of who was White and who was not. Intermarriage was outlawed—a practice that the U.S. Supreme Court did not overturn until 1967. Mixing was punished by the loss of White status.

Whiteness: A culturally constructed concept originating in 1691 Virginia designed to establish clear boundaries of who is White and who is not, a process central to the formation of U.S. racial stratification.

Anthropologist Pem Buck's *Worked to the Bone* (2001) documents the ways in which White privilege was invented in early 1700s Virginia to prevent rebellion among poor, landless Whites who were beginning to join with enslaved African workers against the European economic elite. Elites introduced a set of privileges reserved for White people—the right to own a gun, livestock, and land; the right to obtain freedom at the end of indenture; the right to discipline Black people; and eventually the right to vote. These legal privileges were designed to ensure the cooperation of poor working Whites and White indentured servants, who together constituted a majority of the early colonial populations, and to drive a wedge between the European and African laborers who had much in common.

Efforts to eliminate slavery spread rapidly but unevenly after the American Revolution (1775–83), culminating in the Civil War (1861–65) and President

Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Yet long-established patterns of unequal treatment and entrenched ideas of White racial superiority persisted, providing the foundation for continuing inequality, discrimination, and White dominance. **Jim Crow** segregation laws throughout the South legally enforced the boundaries between White and Black Americans in housing, education, voting rights, property ownership, and access to public services such as transportation, bathrooms, and water fountains. Vigilante White-supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1866, emerged to enforce through violence and terror what they considered to be the natural racial order. Especially in the South, lynchings became a widespread means to intimidate Blacks, enforce segregation, and ensure behavior that Whites considered normal and appropriate. Between 1870 and the 1940s, untold thousands of African American men and women were tortured and brutally murdered (Brundage 1993).

Jim Crow: Laws implemented after the U.S. Civil War to enforce segregation legally, particularly in the South, after the end of slavery.

The Rule of Hypodescent

Imposition of the rule of hypodescent has been key to drawing and maintaining racial boundaries since the days of slavery, when one single drop of "black blood"—that is, one African ancestor—constituted Blackness. *Hypo* literally means "lower." Through **hypodescent** the race of children of mixed marriages is assigned to the lower or subordinate category of the two parents—or, in many cases, the subordinate category of any one of many ancestors.

hypodescent: Sometimes called the "one drop of blood rule"; the assignment of children of racially "mixed" unions to the subordinate group.

Hypodescent rules were enshrined in the laws of many U.S. states and backed by the U.S. Supreme Court. Consider the 1982 court case of Susie Phipps. Born looking "White," Phipps grew up assuming she was White. But when she requested a copy of her birth certificate in 1977, she found herself listed as "colored." A 1970 Louisiana law mandated that a person be designated Black if their ancestry was even one-thirty-second Black—referring to any one of their thirty-two most recent ancestors. Phipps lost a court challenge to this categorization because the state produced evidence that she was three-thirty-seconds Black—more than enough to satisfy the 1970 legal standard. Both the Louisiana Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the lower court's ruling and allowed the decision to stand (Fluehr-Lobban 2019; Jaynes 1982). Phipps's case reveals the process through which U.S. categories of race have been created and the tortured legal logic employed to assign individuals to particular racial categories. Also on full display are (1) the state's central role in establishing and maintaining boundaries between the races it has constructed and (2) the powerful influence of the legacies of slavery and past discrimination on the present (Omi and Winant 1994).

Although hypodescent is no longer enforced in law, it is still widely practiced in U.S. culture. A prominent contemporary example would be U.S. president

Barack Obama. His mother was a White woman from Kansas (she was also an anthropologist). His father was a Black man from Kenya in East Africa. They met as students in Hawaii, where Obama was born. Though 50 percent of his genes came from his father and 50 percent from his mother, the concept of hypodescent still shapes the way some people regard Obama's race. Likewise, Vice President Kamala Harris has most frequently been identified in the media as Black, even though her father immigrated to the United States from Jamaica and her mother immigrated from India. How do you see the rule of hypodescent at work in the construction of Harris's racial identity?

A segregated summer social event—an annual barbecue—on an Alabama plantation, ca. 1935.

Race and Immigration

For four centuries, the boundaries of Whiteness in the United States have been carefully guarded, and a group's admission to that category has been rare and difficult. When the nation encountered diverse immigration from Asia and eastern and southern Europe beginning in the nineteenth century, debate raged about where the newcomers fit: Were the Chinese White? Were the Irish, Germans, Greeks, Italians, eastern Europeans, Jews, and Catholics really White, or were they biologically distinct from earlier immigrants from England, France, and the Nordic countries? Where would people from Mexico, Central America, and South America be placed in the U.S. racial framework?

The struggle to guard the boundaries of Whiteness in order to protect the power and privileges reserved for White people has been particularly intense at certain times in history, generating passionate debate and sparking a sentiment of **nativism**—that is, the desire to favor native inhabitants over new immigrants. Nativists in the nineteenth century fought particularly hard to preserve the so-called racial purity of the nation's Anglo-Saxon origins. Riots, violence, discrimination, and anti-immigrant sentiment were commonplace.

nativism: The favoring of certain long-term inhabitants, namely White people, over new immigrants.

Chinese and Irish Immigrants: What Race? Chinese immigrants first arrived in large numbers in the 1850s to work in California's gold mines, on its farms, and in railroad construction. Because they constituted the first group of Asians to come to this country, other residents struggled to place them in the U.S. racial hierarchy. European immigrant laborers saw the Chinese as competitors for jobs and branded them the "Yellow Peril"—a "race" that could

not be trusted. Federal and state governments treated the Chinese immigrants ambivalently at best and often with great hostility.

Consider the 1854 California court case *People v. Hall*. In a prior lower court case, a Chinese man had provided eyewitness testimony to a murder committed by a White man, George W. Hall. Hall was convicted on the basis of this testimony. However, upon appeal, the California Supreme Court overturned Hall's conviction, claiming that the eyewitness had no standing in the court. The justices pronounced that the Chinese were "a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history has shown; differing in language, opinions, color, and physical conformation, between whom and ourselves nature has placed an impassable difference" (Gross 2010). Thus, the Chinese were not White in the eyes of the law. Like African Americans of the time, they had no legal standing in the courts. Their eyewitness testimony was inadmissible.

Today, most people consider Italians, the Irish, Greeks, and eastern Europeans to be White, but none of these groups was received as White when they first came to the United States. They initially faced discrimination, prejudice, and exclusion because they were not Anglo-Saxon Protestants. When the Irish immigrants arrived in the 1840s and 1850s, they were poor, rural, Catholic, landless, and fleeing intense poverty and disease as a result of the Irish potato famine. Thus, they were seen as an inferior race (Ignatiev 1995). Similarly, the 23 million eastern and southern European immigrants who arrived in the United States between 1880 and 1920 (mostly Italians and eastern European Jews) were generally considered to be members of separate, inferior races—not White. Scientists, politicians, preachers, and the press warned against destroying the unity and purity of the United States by allowing these groups to enter the country. In 1924, the anti-immigrant National Origins Act closed the doors to the large waves of immigrant workers who had been arriving in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over the next four decades, the legislation barred all but a few who were not of northern or western European origins (Binder and Reimers 1995; Foner 2000). The act remained in effect until 1965.

Where did new Chinese immigrants fit in the U.S. racial hierarchy? Miners, including four Chinese, in California, ca. 1852.

Confronted with increasing immigration and diversity, the U.S. legal and political

systems struggled to create and apply consistent definitions of who was White and who was not. Consider the 1923 U.S. Supreme Court case in which Bhagat Singh Thind, an upper-class Sikh immigrant from India, applied for U.S. citizenship. Despite the 1790 U.S. law limiting the right to naturalization (that is, the right to become a citizen) to Whites, Thind argued that as a part of the original "Aryan" or Caucasian race, he was White. Even though the justices agreed with his claim of Aryan or Caucasian ancestry, the Court found that Thind was not White as used in "common speech, to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man" (Lopez 2006, 66). Popular anti-immigrant and nativist sentiment had overcome even the racial pseudoscience prevalent at the time.

How exactly did the Irish, Italians, and eastern European Jews become "White"? Their increasing numbers, their intermarriage with members of other White groups, and their upward class mobility created conditions for inclusion in the White category. Karen Brodkin's book *How the Jews Became White Folks* (1998) offers additional insights into the Whitening process of immigrants after World War II. At that time, the U.S. economy was emerging virtually unscathed from the war's destruction, unlike its competitors in Europe and Japan. And rapid growth in the U.S. economy was supporting an unparalleled expansion of the nation's middle class. Brodkin suggests that an extensive government program to reintegrate soldiers after the war paved the road to upward mobility for many U.S. citizens.

Indeed, the GI Bill of Rights provided a wide array of programs to 16 million returning soldiers, who were primarily White and male. The benefits

A 1903 cartoon from the magazine *Judge* illustrates anti-immigrant sentiment at the turn of the twentieth century. A tide of newcomers—Riff Raff Immigration—representing the criminal element of other countries washes up on American shores, to the displeasure of Uncle Sam, presenting a "danger" to American ideas and institutions.

afforded to veterans included preferential hiring, financial support during the job search, small-business loans, subsidized home mortgages, and educational benefits such as college tuition and living expenses. Newly trained and educated veterans quickly filled the growing U.S. economy's need for professionals, technicians, and managers—jobs that offered opportunities for upward mobility and, thus, racial mobility. These educational opportunities, the dramatic rise in home ownership, and the expansion of new corporate jobs dramatically enlarged the U.S. middle class. The simultaneous elevation of living standards and financial assets of both native Whites and new European immigrants softened earlier boundaries of Whiteness and allowed the status of many immigrants to shift from racially non-White to ethnically White.

Middle Easterners Racial categories continue to be created and contested in the United States today. Where, for example, do people from the Middle East fit? Are Saudis, Iranians, Afghans, Kurds, Syrians, Turks, and Egyptians "White," African American, or Asian? The shifting characterization of people from the Middle East—especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing "war on terror"—reveals newly contested terrain in the race debate and demonstrates how conceptions of race in the United States are constantly changing.

In a study of fourth graders in Brooklyn, New York, after the September 11 attacks, Maria Kromidas (2004) explores how nine-year-old children engage issues of race, religion, and region to create racial categories, assign certain people (both children and adults) to them, and enforce those boundaries through language, humor, and social interaction.

Using the common U.S. census categories, the school that Kromidas studied could be described as 28 percent Black, 1 percent White, 46 percent Hispanic, and 25 percent Asian. But these four categories do not reveal the diversity of the school and its neighborhood—a diversity that makes the students' formulations of race all the more complicated. Although the students and the surrounding community are predominantly African American and second- and third-generation Latino, a significant part of the population is composed of new immigrants from Nigeria, Bangladesh, Guyana, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic.

In light of the events of September 11, students in the elementary school seem preoccupied with the potential danger from a perceived enemy—one they see racially as "brown, foreign, strange, and Muslim" (Kromidas 2004, 29). Though the children do not consider their Muslim classmates to be "evil" or "terrorists," they do take note of these classmates' identities as never before. Kromidas ("MK" in the dialogues below) notes in particular the equation of enemies with Indians, Pakistanis, or Afghans, and eventually all Arabic ("Ara-back")

people. Here we see a racial construction, a lumping together of unrelated people based on a general phenotype—in this case, skin color.

Consider the following small-group student discussions:

EXAMPLE 1

SHERI: We were talking about who started it first, and if they kill a lot of White people. . . . I mean a lot of people we got to go to war right then.

MK: Who are they?

SHERI: The Indians.

MK: The Indians?

SHERI: I don't know—that's what I call them.

JONATHAN: The Pakistans!

MK: The Pakistans?

SODIQ: The Afghanistans!

MK: The Afghanistans?

JOSEPH: The terrorists.

Later that afternoon:

EXAMPLE 2

SHERI: I feel sorry for the Afghanistan people.

SUSANNA: Why do you feel sorry after what they did?

SHERI: Because they gonna die!
(*Most of the class breaks up with laughter.*)

LATISHA: (*standing up*) I feel happy!
(*laughter*)

LATISHA: No, no, no . . . because they want to kill our people, they're going to die, too. They want to have a party when we die, so we should celebrate! [*referring to news clips of street celebrations in the Middle East after September 11*]

ANUPA: If they die, it will be better for us.

MK: Who are they?

ANUPA: The Araback people.

MARISELA: The Afghanistans have always hated the Americans. I know because I always watch the news. (Kromidas 2004, 18–19)

These conversations yield some interesting observations. First, the students have taken on images presented in the media and from the conversations of adults around them; second, the students manipulate those images to create patterns of exclusion in their own context. Through their conversations,

Your Turn: Fieldwork

Initiating a Classroom Conversation about Race

Race and racism can be incredibly difficult topics of conversation in U.S. culture. How can the toolkit of anthropology help build relationships of rapport and trust that lead to deeper mutual understanding and opportunities for collective action?

Addressing issues of race and racism requires first opening up an honest conversation. In the classroom or in another setting on campus—perhaps your dorm, student organization, or religious group—write down your personal reflections and recollections about race and racism as provoked by the questions below. Then form discussion groups of four to five people. Make sure the groups are racially inclusive, if possible. Read and discuss what you have written, giving everyone a chance to participate, before exploring your conversation further.

1. What is your first recollection of race? of racism?
2. How would you describe the cultural environment in which you were raised: racially homogeneous? multiracial/multicultural? something else? What was the mix between home/community and school?
3. What patterns of race relations do you recall from high school? How much healthy social interaction was there across racial lines? What about interracial dating?
4. What patterns of race relations do you find on your college campus? Have you encountered race and racism on campus?
5. Complete this sentence: *The most important thing that our country needs to do NOW about race is* _____ _____.
6. What obstacles do you encounter in discussing and addressing race and racism?

Now consider how the concepts of race and racism introduced in this chapter might help you understand the stories and experiences that emerge in these conversations.

Source: Adapted from Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. 2019. *Race and Racism: An Introduction*, 2nd edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

language groups, social interactions, and friendship networks, the students seek to clarify boundaries and to include and exclude newcomers according to what they see as racial characteristics. In the racial maps of the United States, South Asian Americans and Arab Americans do not have a clear place. Kromidas suggests that in the classroom, as in U.S. culture at large, the fourth graders of New York City are creating a new racial category and placing people in it. The category is generally defined as not White, not Black, but brown: foreign, strange, Muslim, and possibly enemy.

Before September 11, "Middle Eastern" was not considered a separate race in the United States. Officially, the government's Office of Management and

Budget classifies people of Middle Eastern descent as White, along with people of European and North African descent. But the **racialization** (that is, giving a racial character) of Middle Easterners in U.S. culture after September 11, as reflected in Kromidas's study of fourth graders in Brooklyn, suggests a movement away from Whiteness.

racialization: The process of categorizing, differentiating, and attributing a particular racial character to a person or group of people.

Advertising and the Construction of Asian American Racial Identity In *Advertising Diversity: Ad Agencies and the Creation of Asian American Consumers* (2015), anthropologist Shalini Shankar explores the subtle role that advertising and media representation play in constructing and reproducing the racial category of Asian or Asian American, which refers to the 15 million people of Asian descent now living in the United States.

In 1965, new U.S. immigration laws dramatically diversified the pool of people coming to the United States, which included significant numbers of people arriving from Asia. Asian Americans' rising economic prosperity soon drew attention from marketers, and by the 1970s, small, niche advertising firms had emerged to target these consumers. A new generation of ad executives, many of Asian descent, began to market themselves as experts uniquely positioned to aid clients in this emerging sector of multicultural advertising. They argued that their intuitive, embodied understanding of being Asian would allow them to successfully deploy Asian language, culture, symbols, and group-specific imagery to successfully attract Asian American consumers, build brand allegiances, and make money for their clients.

Over the ensuing decades, ad execs have drawn on U.S. census data to bolster the case for targeting Asian American consumers. Increasing numbers of prosperous and upwardly mobile Asian Americans, they argued, would become model consumers. Shankar's study shows how advertising agencies and executives have contributed to the naturalization of this new racial category—making "Asian American" seem like a natural grouping rather than one constructed in the U.S. context. Although 4.6 billion people live in fifty-one Asian countries, advertisers consistently homogenize differences among Asians, including differences of nationality, region, language, and religion. They also blur differences of class, gender, and sexuality within Asian countries in order to create a broader target market. According to Shankar, "In order to make money, ad executives have to define, manipulate and underscore the significance of race. To do so, they must project the most attractive and appealing versions of race, those that let them play up favorable cultural and linguistic attributes compatible with brand identities, but downplay those that would threaten the status quo of an allegedly post-racial America" (2015, 41).

Shankar hopes that this multicultural advertising might play an anti-racist role by undermining stereotypes of Asian Americans as "forever foreign" and

normalizing them as valuable consumers. But through advertising, race and racial differences have become valuable, marketable commodities that turn a profit for both advertisers and advertising agencies. In the process, Shankar warns, this celebration of diversity may divert attention away from prejudices and inequalities that underpin racial stratification in the United States.

Whiteness Today

Popular conversations about race and racism tend to focus on the experiences of people of color. Whiteness is typically ignored, perhaps taken for granted. But analyzing race in the United States requires a careful look at Whiteness. Anthropologists refer to "White" as an unmarked category—one with tremendous power, but one that typically defies analysis and is rarely discussed. Recent scholarship, however, has been moving Whiteness into mainstream debates about race in the United States (Hargrove 2009; Harrison 1998, 2002a; Hartigan 1999; Marable 2002; Mullings 2005a; Roediger 1992).

White Privilege Although the events of the U.S. civil rights movement occurred well before most of today's college students were born, the media images of African Americans being blocked from attending White schools, riding in the front of the bus, sitting at department store lunch counters, or drinking from "Whites-only" water fountains remain etched in our collective cultural memory. Although the overt signs declaring access for "Whites only" have been outlawed and removed, many patterns of interpersonal and institutional behavior have resisted change (McIntosh 1989).

In her article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (1989), anthropologist Peggy McIntosh writes of "an invisible package of unearned assets" that White people have inherited as the legacy of generations of racial discrimination. Through these assets, Whites have become the beneficiaries of cultural norms, values, mental maps of reality, and institutions. Unearned advantages and unearned power are conferred systematically and differentially on one group over others, whether those benefits lie in health, education, housing, employment, banking and mortgages, or the criminal justice system.

McIntosh articulates an extensive list of these privileges, ranging from the mundane to the profound. They include (1) going shopping without being followed or harassed by store security; (2) seeing people of your "race" widely represented in the news, social media, and educational curricula; (3) swearing, dressing in secondhand clothes, or not answering letters or emails without having people attribute these choices to bad morals, poverty, or the illiteracy of your "race"; (4) feeling confident that you have not been singled out by race when a police officer pulls you over or an airport security guard decides to conduct a

full-body scan; and (5) criticizing the government and its policies without being considered an outsider.

As we have discussed in this chapter, since the early European settlement of North America, the boundaries of Whiteness have been carefully constructed and guarded. Today, the privileges associated with Whiteness still pass down from generation to generation. They are simply harder to see. Acknowledging this fact enables us to analyze the functioning and effects of race and racism as a complete system.

As McIntosh writes, "For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country, one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own" (1989, 12). Moving forward, McIntosh urges students to distinguish between (1) the positive advantages that we wish everyone could have and that we can all work to spread and (2) the negative types of advantages that, unless challenged and corrected, will always reinforce current racial hierarchies.

Not all people of European descent benefit equally from the system of White privilege. Whiteness is also stratified along deep, intersecting lines of class and region, gender and sexuality. In a study of a town she calls Shellcracker Haven, southwest of Gainesville, Florida, anthropologist Jane Gibson (1996) explores the process through which a community of poor White people has been systematically cut off from their local means of making a living. By imposing restrictions—all of which benefit large-scale businesses—on fishing,

Anthropologists of race in the United States have studied the often "unmarked" category of Whiteness. The privileges of Whiteness in the United States are not experienced uniformly but rather are stratified along deep lines of class, region, gender, and sexuality.

MAP 5.4
Florida

gaming, trapping, and agricultural activities, the Florida state government and its agencies have gradually prevented Shellcracker Haven's residents from making a living on the land or nearby water.

Gibson argues that these policies of disenfranchisement have been rationalized by stereotypes promoted by state authorities. Such stereotypes portray the local people as "White trash," "swamp trash," and "crackers"; as dirty, skinny, shoeless, toothless, illiterate, and unintelligent. The stereotypes deflect attention from the skewed distribution of wealth and power and the uneven investments in roads, education, and health care that result from state policies. Poor Whites are a subordinate group, distinct from successful middle- and upper-class Whites in the state. In the current age of globalization, economic restructuring and global competition are further undermining the White privilege of many poor and working-class Whites as manufacturing jobs leave the United States.

What Is Racism?

» Analyze racism in terms of both individual actions and institutional systems of power.

Having considered how concepts of race are constructed in the United States and globally, we now turn to consider how ideas of race are used to construct and maintain systems of power that we call racism. Racism draws on the culturally constructed categories of race to rank people as superior or inferior and to allocate access to power, privilege, resources, and opportunities differentially.

Types of Racism

Racism has both individual and institutional components, held together by an ideology—a potent set of ideas.

individual racism: Personal prejudiced beliefs and discriminatory actions based on race.

Individual Racism On an interpersonal level, **individual racism** is expressed through prejudiced beliefs and discriminatory actions. Being prejudiced involves making negative assumptions about a person's abilities or intentions based on the person's perceived race. Discrimination involves taking negative actions toward a person on the basis of their perceived race. Individual racism may be expressed through disrespect, suspicion, scapegoating, and/or violence ranging from police brutality to hate crimes (Jones 2000). Individual, personally mediated acts of racism may be intentional or unintentional. They may be acts of commission (things that are done) or acts of omission (things that are left undone).

microaggressions: Common, everyday verbal or behavioral indignities and slights that communicate hostile, derogatory, and negative messages about someone's race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.

Individual racism can also be expressed through microaggressions. **Microaggressions** refer to common, everyday verbal or behavioral indignities and

slights that communicate hostile, derogatory, and negative messages about someone's race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Racial microaggressions in the U.S. context include subtle slights, snubs, or insults directed toward people of color, often by White people who are unaware that they have transgressed against someone: moving a handbag, checking a wallet, locking a car door, changing seats, commenting, "You speak English well," or asking, "Where do you come from?" These actions and comments may communicate that someone is considered different, a stranger, prone to criminality, or not to be trusted. Underlying these acts of "othering"—making someone feel as if they do not belong—is a hidden cultural curriculum through which people have been taught certain biases associated with race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion, which are then acted out intentionally or unintentionally. Research has shown that the cumulative and recurring experience of microaggressions over a lifetime can create intense psychological and physical stress and harm (Sue 2010, 2015).

Institutional Racism Racism is more than individual prejudiced beliefs or discriminatory acts. It also includes **institutional racism,** sometimes called *structural racism*—patterns by which racial inequality is structured through key cultural institutions, policies, and systems. These include education, health, housing, employment, the legal system (legislatures, courts, and prison systems), law enforcement, and the media. Institutional racism originates in historical events and legal sanctions. But even when it is outlawed, it can persist through contemporary patterns of institutional behavior that perpetuate the historical injustices (Cazenave 2011; Feagin and Feagin 2011; Jones 2000; Neubeck and Cazenave 2001).

institutional racism: Patterns by which racial inequality is structured through key cultural institutions, policies, and systems.

In the United States, stratification along racial lines is a legacy of discrete historical events that include slavery, Jim Crow legal segregation, expropriation of Indigenous lands, and immigration restrictions. Through these legal forms of institutional racism, political, economic, and educational systems were organized to privilege Whiteness. Today, despite the elimination of legal racial discrimination and segregation, persistent individual and institutional racism mean that patterns of inequality still break along color lines. Such racism is evident in employment rates, income and wealth differentials, rates of home ownership, residential patterns, criminal sentencing patterns, incarceration rates, the application of the death penalty, infant mortality, access to health care, life expectancy, investments in public education, college enrollments, and voting rights (Alexander 2012).

For example, the U.S. educational system has been a site of intense contestation over race and racism. In 1896—three decades after the end of slavery—the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that state-sponsored segregation, including in public schools, was constitutional as long as the separate facilities

A racially segregated classroom in Monroe Elementary School, Topeka, Kansas, March 1953. Students Linda Brown (*front right*) and her sister Terry Lynn (*far left, second row back*), along with their parents, initiated the landmark civil rights lawsuit *Brown v. Board of Education*.

for separate races were equal. Across the South, individual White school administrators often refused, on overtly racist grounds, to allow children of color—Black, Hispanic, Asian—entrance to school buildings. But these individual actions alone did not constitute the total system of racism at work. They were systematically supported and enforced by government institutions: local boards of education, legislators, local police with guns and dogs, and court systems—including the U.S. Supreme Court.

Only in 1954, in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, did the Supreme Court reverse itself, declaring unanimously that state laws establishing separate public schools for Black and White students were unconstitutional and that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. At the time, seventeen states, primarily across the South, required racial segregation. Sixteen prohibited it. Even after the Supreme Court ruling banned segregated schools, the federal government was forced to intervene in states like Mississippi and Arkansas, where it deployed National Guard troops to escort students to classes in order to end racist practices and protect student safety.

Contemporary racial disparities in school funding reveal how historical patterns of institutional racism can continue long after discrimination has been declared illegal (Miller and Epstein 2011). In 2003, the New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, uncovered a long-standing disparity in state funding for public schools in New York City and its suburban areas. New York City public schools, with high proportions of students of color, received an average of $10,469 per student, whereas schools in more affluent, predominantly White suburbs received $13,760 per student. The courts ordered New York State to provide $9.2 billion for capital improvement of New York City school buildings and to increase its annual education budget by up to $5.6 billion to cover the costs of redressing this inequality. Only in 2021 did the state agree to settle this matter and fully comply with the court's requirements.

racial ideology: A set of popular ideas about race that allows the discriminatory behaviors of individuals and institutions to seem reasonable, rational, and normal.

Racial Ideology Racism relies on a third component—a set of popular ideas about race, or a **racial ideology**—that allows the discriminatory behaviors of individuals and institutions to seem reasonable, rational, and normal. Ideas about the superiority of one race over another—shaped and reinforced in

school systems, religious institutions, government, and the media—caused people in the United States to believe that slavery was natural, that the European settlers had a God-given right to "civilize" and "tame" the American West, and that segregation in schools was a reasonable approach to providing public education. As these ideas became ingrained in day-to-day relationships and institutional patterns of behavior, they ultimately provided the ideological glue that held racial stratification in place.

Today, social scientists note that contemporary racial ideologies are much more subtle, often drawing on core U.S. values of individualism, social mobility, meritocracy, and color blindness to make their case. In his book *Racism without Racists* (2010), sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva critiques the contemporary calls in U.S. culture for color blindness—that is, the elimination of race as a consideration in a wide range of institutional processes, from college admissions to the reporting of arrests by police. The ideology of color blindness suggests that the best way to end discrimination in the post–civil rights era is to treat individuals as equally as possible without regard to race. Bonilla-Silva warns that while the desire to transcend race by adopting a stance of color blindness appears reasonable and fair, the approach ignores the uneven playing field created by centuries of legal racism in areas such as wealth, property ownership, education, health, and employment. A color-blind ideology, Bonilla-Silva suggests, may actually perpetuate racial inequality by obscuring the historical effects of racism, the continuing legacy of racial discrimination, and the entrenched patterns of institutional behavior that undergird racism today.

In a country like the United States, which prides itself on being a meritocracy (a system that views people as a product of their own efforts and in which equal opportunity is available to all), the continuing existence of racism and skin-color privilege in the twenty-first century is difficult for many people to acknowledge. When the dominant culture celebrates the ideals of individualism and equal access to social mobility, it is ironic that for many people, success depends not only on hard work, intelligence, and creativity but also on the often unrecognized and unearned assets—cultural, political, and economic—that have accrued over hundreds of years of discrimination and unequal opportunity based on race.

Injury and Resilience

In *Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago* (2014), anthropologist Laurence Ralph looks beneath the media narrative of violence, decay, and disease that so often characterizes stories of urban Chicago to illuminate a community's resilience amid injury and unjust circumstances. Ralph spent three years conducting ethnographic fieldwork in an area on Chicago's West Side that he calls "Eastwood." This low-income, working-class, predominantly

Christopher Loperena
Advocate for Black and Indigenous Rights in Honduras

Anthropologist Christopher Loperena was originally drawn to anthropology as an undergraduate at the University of Chicago. He took a course taught by a forensic anthropologist who had worked in Guatemala investigating crimes against rural Indigenous Mayan communities, exhuming human remains to uncover the history of government-sponsored terror and genocide. "That was eye opening," Loperena says. "I saw anthropology's ability to address inequality and injustice in explicit terms." Now a professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center, Loperena uses the tools of anthropology to address matters of racial injustice, land rights, and unequal development among Black and Indigenous communities in Honduras.

After graduation, Loperena and a group of fellow undergraduate student activists worked with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to remove Taco Bell from campus in protest of the company's record of low wages and human rights violations against immigrant farmers in Florida. Together, they formed a nonprofit organization called Rising Roots International to continue the work. The collective was invited to Honduras to support an Indigenous rights organization led by Berta Cáceres that was protecting Indigenous homelands from development-driven displacement. There, Loperena met leaders of the Garifuna people, a Black-Indigenous people of West African, Arawak, and Carib descent who have lived along Honduras's Caribbean coast for more than 200 years.

Anthropologist Christopher Loperena

During graduate school, Loperena returned to Honduras to lead a collaborative study on land use in Garifuna communities. His study would later be used to substantiate Garifuna collective land claims in the face of encroachment by the Honduran state, agribusiness, and real estate developers.

"That collaborative research project changed the whole trajectory of my career. I was fascinated by the almost palpable sense of collective propriety that Garifuna had over the coastal lands they claimed as their ancestral territory, the importance of those lands for their sense of belonging, and their steadfast commitment to defend their rights. It was really overwhelming coming from the U.S. context where Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples have faced systematic dispossession historically and contemporarily. As a result, the question of race became central to all my work.

"Being in Honduras expanded my own understanding of race and processes of racialization. In other parts of Latin America, like Puerto Rico, Colombia, or Brazil, nationalist ideologies of *mestizaje* [interracial mixing] included Blackness. But in Honduras the term *mestizo* refers specifically to people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. Honing in on these differences allowed me to see how anti-Blackness operates, even in contexts where Black people are ostensibly 'included' within narratives of national belonging.

"In the United States we are taught to see these categories 'Black' and 'Indigenous' as mutually exclusive. But Garifuna are claiming their identity as a Black and

Indigenous people—both. That has all sorts of political and legal implications in Honduras.

"The Honduran state has made a concerted effort to position Garifuna as only of African descent. That is a way of displacing them from the nation, a way of saying that only Indigenous people with origins before Columbus can have a legitimate claim to these lands. By virtue of their Blackness, the Garifuna are seen as foreigners. That's an argument that the Honduran state actually made before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR). The community said that the state was in violation of their collective property rights. The state said you don't have legitimate claim to these lands because you're African."

> *"In the United States we are taught to see these categories 'Black' and 'Indigenous' as mutually exclusive. But Garifuna are claiming their identity as a Black and Indigenous people—both."*

Loperena's work in Honduras has focused attention on how government-led efforts, particularly the development of ecotourism projects, are leading to the dispossession of Black and Indigenous peoples from their lands and resources.

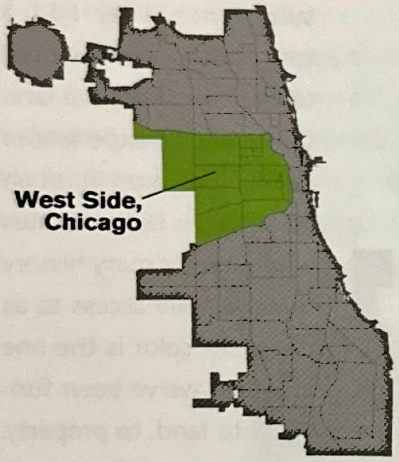
"There is certainly a long history of dispossession that spans the Americas. The colonial period, starting with the slave trade, was about extracting resources, including bodies, labor, and resources to fuel the industrial revolution in Europe and subsequently in the United States. Racism is central to this history of extractivism and that history continues today."

Today, ecotourism is a pillar of Honduran economic growth and participation within the global economy. Land where Garifuna have lived for over 200 years—beautiful white sand beaches and resource-rich forests where Garifuna have historically hunted, fished, and gathered materials for home and temple building —is crucial to the project. Working with international conservation nongovernmental organizations, international financial institutions like the World Bank, and elite Honduran real estate interests, the government has set aside large areas of the Caribbean coast as conservation areas and has heavily restricted their use. "Here we see how conservation practices can negatively impact the rights of people, specifically rural communities of color, and how it can lead to the devaluation of Black life in relation to ecotourism development objectives."

Now Garifuna communities are fighting to have greater say over the management of these areas. "When I first went to the Garifuna communities, I found vibrant, thriving, well-established communities—forty-six communities overall where the resources of the ocean and forests are critical to subsistence. They had a very intricate and nuanced relationship with the land that I hadn't experienced having grown up in urban areas in the United States where the primary history that we have access to as people of color is the one in which we've been fundamentally dispossessed of our rights to land, to property, to equal status, or to any sort of economic or social means to thrive." The Garifuna's deep connection to the land informs their land struggles and land defense practices in Honduras.

In 2015, Garifuna leaders asked Loperena to use his years of research to become an expert witness in a case they brought against the Honduran government in the IACHR for its role in violating Garifuna territorial rights. "I had reservations about the ability of the law and the Court to achieve justice and address these structural inequalities. But I also knew that I was being asked by the community to contribute." In 2016, after a decade-long investigation, the court issued two judgments against the Honduran government. "In the end I know that my expert witness report was an important piece in the case, something the judges cited in their decision."

In response to increasing gun violence in 2016, people organized a march in Magnificent Mile, a neighborhood in Chicago, to commemorate lives lost.



MAP 5.5
West Side, Chicago

African American neighborhood of just over 40,000 residents occupies just under four square miles, yet it disproportionately figures in the reports of journalists, scholars, and government officials interested in urban issues. Ralph originally moved to Eastwood to study gang violence. He volunteered at an anti-violence program and visited churches, hospitals, rehabilitation programs, and social welfare agencies. He spoke with people living with HIV, those wounded by gang bullets, and others struggling with drug addiction.

In *Renegade Dreams*, Ralph carefully details the historical, political, and economic context in which Eastwood residents today are entangled—how the legacy of institutional racism in housing, employment, education, and law enforcement continues to shape much of Eastwood today.

Recounting an interview with Aaron Smalls of Chicago's Department of Planning, Ralph describes Smalls's conclusion that Eastwood was "doomed for failure." Neighborhood housing was crumbling. Half its residents lived below the poverty line. Half were unemployed, a rate three times higher than the average in Chicago and five times higher than the national average. Many had not finished high school. Fifty-seven percent were in some way caught up in the criminal justice system, either in jail, on parole, or under house arrest. The facts were all true. But the conclusion did not match Ralph's ethnographic findings.

One of Ralph's key informants, Justin Cone, navigated Eastwood in a wheelchair. He had been shot in the spine during a gang-related incident. Cone worked at an anti-violence program, but he aspired to join the Crippled Footprint Collective, a group of young Black men who now use wheelchairs who talk to at-risk high school youth about the perils of gang life and the lifelong injuries that can be sustained from near-fatal gun violence. In Eastwood, far more shooting victims survive than are killed. They live with their injuries forever. Like members of the Collective, Cone refused to succumb to despair and aspired to do more to end gang violence.

Ralph also discovered the diverse, surprising alliances that arose in the community. When real estate developers proposed demolishing dilapidated neighborhood homes to build new housing, an alliance of grandmothers, church leaders, and gang members with their crews joined to resist the developers, the displacement of long-term residents, and neighborhood change. The gang members' participation in constructive community work pushed Ralph to recognize that the stereotypical portrayal of dangerous, threatening gangs is an overly simplistic narrative that is too often imposed from outside the community. In the community, a gang member may also be the grandson of an older neighborhood resident facing eviction. These complex identities are too often obscured by external assessments.

After three years in the community, Ralph chose to focus his study on the nature of injury, particularly the injuries and disabilities caused by violence.

Many of the injuries experienced in Eastwood are physical: disease, violence, broken limbs, paralysis, and the physical harm caused by addiction. These are the injuries so often discussed, pathologized, and obsessed over by government officials, scholars, and the media. But Ralph also explores other injuries: the anxieties of parents and kids navigating the violent vulnerabilities of life, stray bullets, peer pressure, and predatory police. These encumbrances follow them through their lives, weigh them down, and affect their future prospects.

By exploring the landscape of injury in the Eastwood neighborhood, Ralph identifies the community's most unexamined resource. Out of injury, Ralph found, came dreams, aspirations, and imaginations of a different future. During his time in Eastwood, he found people who dreamed dreams of resilience: safe passage to school; a stable job; affordable, livable housing; a healthy environment; or the opportunity to become an anti-violence activist. In Eastwood, he found people who recognized the reality that systemic change is difficult and that dreams don't always come true. Despite the statistical odds against them and the cumulative impact of generations of institutional racism, Eastwood residents determinedly imagined alternative futures for themselves and their community. They dreamed as acts of defiance. They dreamed renegade dreams.

Ralph's ethnographic study of Chicago's African American community reveals the power of local communities of color to mobilize and engage in political activism. It also demonstrates how such groups can contest stereotypes of urban Black communities and practices of racial discrimination and exclusion, whether those involve housing, policing, or the environmental and community impacts of public infrastructure projects. For a look at efforts to combat racism in a different context, see "Anthropologists Engage the World," on pp. ooo–ooo.

In this chapter, we have begun our work as budding anthropologists to unmask the structures of power, starting with race and racism. We have seen how flawed ideas of "race" serve as rationales for very real systems of power built around racial stratification both in the United States and around the world. As globalization, particularly global migration, brings cultural systems of meaning and stratification into closer contact, your ability to analyze and engage dynamics of race and racism will prove to be increasingly important. In the following chapters, we will consider other systems of power—including ethnicity, gender, sexuality, kinship, and class—and their points of mutual intersection with race.

Thinking Like an Anthropologist: Shifting Our Perspectives on Race and Racism

As you encounter race and racism in your life—on campus, in the classroom, at the workplace, in the news, or in your family—thinking like an anthropologist can help you to better understand these experiences. As you untangle this knotty problem, remember to think about the big questions we addressed in this chapter:

- Do biologically separate races exist?
- How is race constructed around the world?
- How is race constructed in the United States?
- What is racism?

After reading this chapter, you should be better equipped to engage the challenges of race and racism. As you think back on the story of George Floyd and the events in Minneapolis, Minnesota, how would you apply the ideas of this chapter to assist your analysis and inform your responses?

How can an anthropological approach to the study of race and racism help us analyze and confront these contentious issues? How can we learn a language about race and racism that will allow us to talk and work together across lines of race, gender, sexuality, class, and political perspective to confront the continuing American legacy of racism? As we have seen throughout this chapter, the anthropological study of race not only examines the social construction of race and the establishment of systems of racism but also takes seriously movements against racism that emerge from communities of color and their allies. How can you begin to engage these crucial issues of our time and to apply these anthropological concepts to your life today?

Key Terms

race (p. 161)
racism (p. 162)
intersectionality (p. 163)
genotype (p. 165)
phenotype (p. 165)
colonialism (p. 169)
miscegenation (p. 173)
White supremacy (p. 179)
Whiteness (p. 179)
Jim Crow (p. 180)
hypodescent (p. 180)
nativism (p. 181)
racialization (p. 189)
individual racism (p. 192)
microaggressions (p. 192)
institutional racism (p. 193)
racial ideology (p. 194)

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